1768.

MINUTES

OF SOME LATE

CONVERSATIONS,

BETWEEN

The Rev. Mr. WESLEYS, and Others.

BRISTOL:

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M. DCC. LXVIII.

MINUTES, &c.

BRISTOL, Tuesday, *Aug.* 16, &c. 1768.

Q. 1st. WHAT Preachers are *admitted* this Year?

A. Thomas Janes, Francis Asbury, John Peacock, John Wittam, Thomas Cherry, William Hunter, Joseph Harper, John Smith, William Collins, Thomas Halliday, and William Harry.

Q. 2. Who remains on Trial?

A. None.

Q. 3. Who are admitted *on Trial?*

A. John Duncan, George Shadford, Jonathan Crowle, John Goodwin, Robert Howard, Richard Seed, Samuel Bardsley, Stephen Proctor, Martin Rodda, Joseph Garnett, Robert Bell, and Christopher Watkins.

Q. 4. Who desist from travelling?

A. William Fugill and John Davis.

Q. 5. Who act as *Assistants* this Year?

A. P. Jaco, J Glasbrook, T. Hanson, Dun. Wright, T. Hanby, Ben. Rhodes, N. Manners, James Cotty, John Whitehead, John Furze, Sam. Levick, T. Rankin, John Pawson, T. Brisco, A. Mather, T. Johnson, Robert Costerdine, John Ellis, James Brown, J. Oliver, C. Hopper, D. Bump-

Bumpſted, T. Mitchell, Sam. Woodcock, Jacob Rowell, Richard Boardman, James Oddie, Joſeph Pilmoor, George Hudſon, William Thomſon, T. Simpſon, John Hilton, R. Bourke, G. Story, John Dillon, John Maſon, T. Taylor.

Q. 6. Are there any Objections to any of the Preachers?

A. Name them one by one: (Which was done).

Q. 7. How are the Preachers ſtationed?

A. As follows:

1. *London*, P. Jaco, John Murlin, M. Davis.
2. *Suſſex*, J. Glaſbrook, Richard Henderſon.
3. *Kent*, Thomas Hanſon, Thomas Janes.
4. *Colcheſter*, Francis Aſbury.
5. *Norwich*, Duncan Wright, Alex. M'Nab.
6. *Bedfordſhire*, T. Hanby, John Duncan.
7. *Oxfordſhire*, Benj. Rhodes, Martin Rodda.
8. *Wilts*, South, N. Manners, William Barker.
9. North, James Cotty, Jonathan Crowle.
10. *Briſtol*, John Whitehead, Will. Whitwell.
11. *Devon*, John Furze, John Magor.
12. *Cornwall*, Eaſt, Sam. Levick, John Eaſton, John Goodwin.
13. *Cornwall*, Weſt, T. Rankin, Lanc. Harriſon, George Shadford, Tho. Weſtell.
14. *Staffordſhire*, John Pawſon, J. W. John Allen.
15. *Cheſhire*, T. Olivers, William Harry (Stephen Proctor).
16. *Lancaſhire*, South, A. Mather, J. Standring. North, Tho. Briſco, J. Oldham.
17. *Derbyſhire*, Thomas Johnſon, John Nelſon, W. Darney.
18. *Sheffield*, Robert Conſterdine, John Wittam.
19. *Lincoln*. Eaſt, John Ellis, John Peacock, John Poole.

20. *Lin*

20. *Lincoln.* Weſt, James Brown, John Shaw, Thomas Carlill.
21. *Leeds*, John Oliver, R. Roberts.
22. *Birſtal*, C. Hopper, T. Lee, Daniel Bumſted. P. Greenwood.
23. *Haworth*, T. Mitchell, Joſeph Guilford, William Ellis, T. Newall.
24. *York*, Samuel Woodcock, Jer. Robertſhaw, James Longbotham, Sam. Bardſley.
25. *Yarm*, Jacob Rowell, W. Brammah, Ja. Brownfield.
26. The *Dales*, Richard Boardman, W. Hunter, Joſeph Garnet, Robert Bell.
27. *Newcaſtle*, J. Cownley, James Oddie, Supern. Mat. Lowes, J. Thomſon.
28. *Wales*, G Hudſon, Joſeph Harper, Joſeph Pilmoor, Moſeley Check.
29. *Dunbar*, William Minethorp.
30. *Edinburgh*, William Thomſon.
31. *Dundee, Perth, Aberdeen*, Thomas Cherry, Thom. Simpſon, Robert Howard.
32. *Glaſgow*, J. Atley.
33. *Dublin*, T. Taylor, John Johnſon, Supern.
34. *Waterford*, James Dempſter.
35. *Cork*, J. Dillon, George Story.
36. *Limerick*, Richard Burke, J. Maſon.
37. *Caſtlebar*, W. Collins, R. W.
38. *Athlone*, Barn. Thomas, John Murray.
39. *Augher*, T. Halliday, Joſ. Smith, J. Rea.
40. *Armagh*, Chriſtopher Watkins, Hugh Sanderſon, Richard Steel.

Q. 8. What Number are in the Society at London 2180, Suſſex 176, Kent 230, Eſſex 128, Norfolk 316, Bedfordſhire 170, Oxfordſhire 60, Wilts 456, Briſtol 1177, Devon 384, Cornwall, Eaſt, 543, Weſt, 1495, Staffordſhire 1994, Cheſhire 484, Lancaſhire 2000, Derbyſhire 676, Sheffield

field 600, Epworth 871, Grimsby 707, Leeds 1088, Birstal 1476, Haworth 1356, York 1050, Yarm 892, The Dales 890, Newcastle 1910, Dunbar 40, Edinburgh 146, Dundee 46, Aberdeen 150, Perth 24, Glasgow 76, Wales 250, Ireland 2700. In all 26341.

Q. 9. What is the *Kingswood* Collection?

A. One Hundred Seventy-three Pounds.

Q. 10. What is contributed towards the Debt?

A. Five Thousand, Six Hundred, and Sixty Pounds.

Q. 11. What Part of this was paid for Law?

A. One Hundred Eighty-two Pounds.

Q. 12. What to supply the Necessities of the Preachers?

A. Twenty-six Pounds.

Q. 13. What reserv'd for contingent Expences?

A. An Hundred Pounds; so that near Five Thousand Pounds were paid away.

Q. 14. What is the whole Debt remaining in England, Scotland, and Ireland?

A. As near as we can compute, it is, Seven Thousand, Seven Hundred, and Twenty-eight Pounds.

Q. 15. Would it not be proper for all the Deeds relating to Preaching-houses, to be lodged in one Place?

A. Certainly it would. Let a strong Box be prepared for them in *London*.

Q. 16. Many have contributed largely this Year, supposing the Debt would be paid off at once, can we ask these to contribute again?

A. We cannot press them; it must be left to their own Generosity.

Q. 17. What is received this Year for the Preachers Fund?

A. Forty-two Pounds.

Q. 18. Is it proper, that none ſhould have any Claim on this Fund, till it amounts to Five-hundred Pounds. And that it ſhould never ſink lower than this?

A. By no means. This is mere worldly Prudence. Let thoſe two Rules be aboliſhed.

Q. 19. Who ſucceeds *William Penington?*

A. Thomas Taylor.

Q. 20. Where and when may our next Conference begin?

A. At *Leeds*, the firſt *Tueſday* in *Auguſt*.

Q. 21. We have very imperfect Accounts of all Things from *Ireland* and *Scotland*. How may this be remedied?

A. Let the Aſſiſtants of *Dublin* and *Edinburgh*, *Thomas Taylor*, and *William Thompſon*, procure and bring, or ſend to the Conference an exact Account of the Societies, the yearly Subſcription, the Collection for *Kingſwood*, and the Preachers Fund.

Q. 22. Should itinerant Preachers follow Trades?

A. This is an important Queſtion. And as it is the firſt Time it has come before us, it will be proper to conſider it thoroughly. The Queſtion is not, whether they may occaſionally Work with their Hands, as St. *Paul* did: But whether it be proper for them to keep Shop and follow Merchandize. Of thoſe who do at preſent it may be obſerved, they are unqueſtionably upright Men. They are Men of conſiderable Gifts. We ſee the Fruit of their Labour, and they have a large Share in the Eſteem and Love of the People. All this pleads on their Side, and cannot but give us a Prejudice in their Favour. Three of theſe urge Neceſſity for doing this: One that he may help his aged Father, another that he may maintain his Wife, a third that he may keep his Children. A fourth does

does not plead any Neceſſity, but a Deſire of doing more Good. One anſwered *J. O.* "If you can't help your Father without trading, and if the Societies either cannot or will not, I will allow him, what you allow him now. So this Neceſſity is at an End." To *Ja. O.* it was anſwered, "Your Wife wants nothing yet. 'Tis not likely, ſhe ever will. You have Money before Hand. So your Neceſſity is not yet begun. To *R. R.* "You do not want now. When you do want any Thing for your Children, you ſhall have it. So here is no Neceſſity." As to the ſecond Plea, doing more Good, it was enquired, Is it not doing Evil that Good may come? Is not the Thing in Queſtion both evil in itſelf (for us) and evil in its Conſequences? (Firſt, Is it not with Regard to travelling Preachers evil in itſelf?) Is it well conſiſtent with that Scripture, 2 *Tim.* ii. 4. No Man that warreth, (takes on him the Profeſſion of a Soldier, (as we eminently do) entangleth himſelf with the Affairs of this Life; plainly referring to the *Roman* Law, which abſolutely forbad any Soldier to follow any other Profeſſion. Is it well conſiſtent with that Word, *Give Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Teaching: Meditate on theſe Things, give thyſelf wholly to them?* (1 *Tim.* iv. 13. 15.) Can we be ſaid to give ourſelves wholly to theſe Things, if we follow another Profeſſion! Does not our Church in her Office of Ordination, require every Miniſter to do this? If they do not, the more ſhame for them. But this plainly ſhews, what both they and we ought to do. *We* indeed more particularly; becauſe God has called *us* to *provoke them to Jealouſy*, to ſupply their Lack of Service to the Sheep that are as without Shepherds, and to ſpend and be ſpent therein. We above all; becauſe ever travelling Preacher ſolemn-

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ly profeſſes to have nothing elſe to do, and receives his little Allowance for this very End, that he may not need to do any Thing elſe, that he may not be entangled in the Things of this Life; but may give himſelf wholly to theſe Things?

Secondly, Is it not Evil in its Conſequences? Have not ſome ill Conſequences appeared already? And is there not the greateſt Reaſon to apprehend that ſtill worſe would follow? We are concern'd to give no Offence, either to *Jew* or *Gentile*, or to the Church of God. But this has already offended, not only many of the World, but many of our own Brethren. Many of the Preachers in particular have been much griev'd: Yea and thoſe moſt, who were moſt alive to God. Now the Beginning of Offence, is as when one letteth out Water: Who can gather it up again? They are griev'd the more, becauſe they apprehend this would be an increaſing Evil. For where will it ſtop? If one Preacher follows Trade, ſo may twenty; ſo may every one. And if any of them trade a little, why not ever ſo much? Who can fix, how far he ſhould go? Therefore we adviſe our Brethren who have been concerned herein, to give up all and attend to the one Buſineſs. And we doubt not but God will recompenſe them an hundred Fold, even in this World, as well as in the World to come.

It is true, this can't be done on a ſudden. But it may between this and the next Conference. And even as to the Drops that many ſold, if their Wives ſell them at Home, well: But it is not proper for any Preacher to hawk them about. It has a bad Appearance. It does not well ſuit the Dignity of his Calling.

Q. 23. In many Places the Work of God ſeems to ſtand ſtill. What can be done to revive and enlarge it?

A. 1. Much Good has been done by the Books which have been publiſh'd: And more would be, if they were ſpread more effectually. At preſent there is a grand Defect herein, almoſt all over *Great Britain* and *Ireland*. Thouſands of our Brethren never ſaw or heard of the moſt uſeful Books we have printed. Many have heard of them, but cannot have them, tho' they have deſired it over and over. Little can be done to remedy this, unleſs all of you will lend an helping Hand. You may do this by recommending Reading to all the People, frequently and earneſtly: Not only in general, but reading this or that Tract in particular: By reading a Page or two of a Book in the Congregation, and then recommending it: By carrying round with you, this or that Book, ſuitable to the Subject of your Sermon: By begging Money of the Rich to buy Tracts for the Poor, and giving them away prudently: And by recommending none but thoſe which we recommend, and ſelling none elſe: Which will effectually prevent the improper Publications, either of itinerant or local Preachers.

2. Let there be more Field-Preaching: Without this, the Work of God will hardly increaſe in any Place.

3. Let the Preaching at Five in the Morning be conſtantly kept up, wherever you can have twenty Hearers. This is the Glory of the *Methodiſts*: Whenever this is dropt, they will dwindle away into nothing. Riſing early is equally Good for Soul and Body. It helps the Nerves better than a thouſand Medicines: And in particular, preſerves

ſerves the Sight, and prevents Lowneſs of Spirits more than can well be imagined.

4. As ſoon as there are four Men or Women Believers in any Place, put them into a *Band*: Theſe need to be enquired after continually, and the Place of any that do not meet ſupplied. In every Place where there are Bands, meet them conſtantly, and encourage them to ſpeak without Reſerve.

5. Be conſcientiouſly exact in the whole Methodiſt Diſcipline. And that you may underſtand it, read over carefully the plain *Account of the People call'd Methodiſts*, and the ſeveral *Minutes of the Conferences*.

One Part of our Diſcipline has been generally neglected, namely the changing of the Stewards. This has been attended with ill Conſequences: Many Stewards have been ready to ride over the Preacher's Head. Let every Aſſiſtant at the next Quarterly-Meeting, Change one Steward at leaſt, in every Society, if there be therein any other Man that can keep an Account.

6. Beware of *Formality*, in ſinging, or it will creep in upon us unawares. Is it not creeping in already, by thoſe complex Tunes, which it is ſcarce poſſible to ſing with Devotion? Such is "Praiſe the Lord ye bleſſed ones:" Such the long quavering Hallelujah, annext to the Morning Song Tune, which I defy any Man living to ſing devoutly. The repeating the ſame Word ſo often, (but eſpecially while another repeats different Words, the horrid Abuſe which runs thro' the modern Church Muſick) as it ſhocks all common Senſe, ſo it neceſſarily brings in dead Formality, and has no more of Religion in it than a *Lancaſhire* Hornpipe. Beſide, that it is a flat Contradiction to our Lord's Command.

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"Uſe not vain Repetians." For what is vain Repetition, if this is not? What End of Devotion does it ſerve? Again. Do not ſuffer the People to ſing too ſlow. This naturally tends to Formality, and is brought in by thoſe who have very ſtrong, or very weak Voices. Is it not poſſible, that all the Methodiſts in the Nation ſhould ſing equally quick? Why ſhould not the Aſſiſtant ſee that they be taught to ſing in every large Society. And do this in ſuch a Manner, as to obviate the ill Effects, which might otherwiſe ſpring therefrom?

7. Let a Faſt be obſerved in all our Societies, on Friday *September* 30, and on the Friday after *New Year's Day*, after *Lady-Day*, and after *Midſummer-Day* next.

8. Which of us "faſts every Friday in the Year?" Which of us faſts at all? Does not this ſhew the preſent Temper of our Minds, (tho' not of all) ſoft and unnerv'd? How then can we advance the Work of God, tho' we may preach *loud* and *long* enough? Here is the Root of the Evil. Hence the Work of God droops; few are convinc'd, few juſtified, few of our Brethren ſanctified! Hence more and more doubt, if we are to be ſanctified at all till Death: I mean ſanctified throughout, ſaved from all Sin, perfected in Love. That we may all ſpeak the ſame Thing, I aſk once for all, Shall we defend this Perfection or give it up? You all agree to defend it, meaning thereby, as we did from the Beginning, Salvation from all Sin, by the Love of God and our Neighbour filling the Heart. The *Papiſts* ſay, "This can't be attain'd, 'till we have been a ſufficient Time in Purgatory." The *Diſſenters* ſay, "Nay, it will be attain'd as ſoon as the Soul and Body Part." The *Old Methodiſts* ſaid, "It may be attian'd

tain'd *before* we die: A Moment after is too late." Is it ſo or no? You are all agreed, we may be ſav'd from all Sin *before Death*. The Subſtance then is ſettled. But as to the Circumſtance, Is the Change inſtantaneous or gradual? It is both one and the other. From the Moment we are juſtified, there may be a *gradual Sanctification* or a growing in Grace, a daily Advance in the Knowledge and Love of God. And if Sin ceaſed before Death, there muſt in the Nature of the Thing be an inſtantaneous Change. There muſt be a laſt Moment wherein it does exiſt, and a firſt Moment wherein it does not. But ſhould we in preaching inſiſt on both one and the other? Certainly we muſt inſiſt on the gradual Change: And that earneſtly and continually. And are there not Reaſons why we ſhould inſiſt on the *Inſtantaneous* alſo? If there be ſuch a bleſſed Change before Death, ſhould we not encourage all Believers to expect it? And the rather, becauſe conſtant Experience ſhews, the more earneſtly they expect this, the more ſwiftly and ſteddily does the gradual Work of God go on in their Souls. The more watchful they are againſt all Sin, the more careful to grow in Grace, the more zealous of good Works, and the more punctual in their Attendance on all the Ordinances of God: Whereas juſt the contrary Effects are obſerv'd, whenever this Expectation ceaſes. They are *ſaved by Hope*, by this Hope of a total Change ſaved with a gradually increaſing Salvation. Deſtroy this Hope, and that Salvation ſtands ſtill; or rather decreaſes daily. Therefore whoever would advance the gradual Change in Believers ſhould ſtrongly inſiſt upon the Inſtantaneous.

9. But how far from entire Sanctification are we ſtill? The Religion of the Methodiſts in general, is not internal, at leaſt, not deep, univerſal, uni-

form; but superficial, partial, uneven. And what Pains do we take to make it otherwise? Do we visit from House to House according to the Plan laid down in the Minutes. Have you done this? Mr. *Colley* begun. But he is gone to Paradise. And who has trod in his Steps? What hinders? Want of Time? Only (as *William Penington* said) spend Half the Time in *this visiting*, which you spend in talking uselessly, and you will have Time enough. Do this, particularly in confirming and building up Believers. Then and not till then, the Work of the Lord will prosper in your Hands.

10. But what can we do for the *rising Generation?* Unless we can take care of these, the present Revival of Religion will be Res unius Ætatis: It will last only the Age of a Man. Who will *labour* herein? Let him that is zealous for God, and the Souls of Men begin *now*.

1. Spend an Hour a Week with the Children in every large Town; whether you like it or no.

2. Talk with them every Time you see any at home.

3. Pray in earnest for them.

4. Diligently instruct and vehemently exhort all Parents, at their own Houses.

5. Preach expressly on this, particularly at *Midsummer*, when you speak of *Kingswood*.

11. Let every Preacher read carefully over the Life of Mr. *Brainerd*. Let us be Followers of him, as he was of *Christ*, in absolute Self-devotion, in total Deadness to the World, and in fervent Love to God and Man. We want nothing but this. Then the World and the Devil must fall under our Feet.

12. Lastly, 1. Let us keep to the Church. Over and above all the Reasons that were formerly given for this, we add another now from long Experience,

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They that leave the Church leave the Methodiſts. The Clergy cannot ſeparate us from our Brethren, the Diſſenting Miniſters can and do. Therefore carefully avoid whatever has a Tendency to ſeparate Men from the Church. In particular, preaching at any Hour which hinders them from going to it. Let every Aſſiſtant look to this.

2. Let all the Servants in our Preaching-Houſes go to Church on Sunday Morning at leaſt.

3. Let every Preacher go always on Sunday Morning, and when he can in the Afternoon. God will bleſs thoſe who go on Week Days too, as often as they have Opportunity.

FINIS.